

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers*
and *Petty-Statefmen*, of all Sides.

Tuesday, April 4. 1704.

I Am content to hear some Reflections on this Paper, on Account of the earnest Care I have taken to represent the French Greatness in its proper Dimensions, and set our Enemies in a true Light, it being equally Injurious to us, *as a People*, to believe them either too big, or too little.

It no way disturbs me, to hear my self call'd a *Jacobite*, a *Frenchman*, and sometimes a *Papist*; one that exposes the Nakedness of the Confederacy; betrays the Weakness of our Friends, and the like.

But 'tis a singular satisfaction to me, That pursuant to the first Design, I can yet hear no body contradict it, as to Truth of Fact, or charge me with Falshood and Partiality.

This, together with the usefulness of my Design satisfies me also, with respect to the meanness of the manner, and the Work of Writing a Peny Paper, which as it is only writing a History sheet by sheet, and *letting the World see it as I go on*, does no way lessen the real Value of the Design, however low such a step may seem to be.

And tho' it may seem below the Dignity of an Historian thus to retail his Undertaking to the World, yet this, and a Thousand lower steps than this, I am ready to take, if the end and design of this Under-

taking may be the better pursued, *Viz*: To open the Eyes of Mankind to the true Interest of their Native Country.

And as I have very good Testimony, that for this end purely, and Abstracted from the Mercenary Prospekt of Writing, I have undertaken this Work, having never accepted the least Gratification for my Labour, so I shall think my self sufficiently Rewarded, if I can finish my Design, with the same Approbation that *Wiser Men than I* have thought due to the Undertaking.

The unquestioned Benefit to this Nation of seeing our Danger, and of knowing the worst of our Difficulties, is Satisfaction beyond the Power of Reproach to shake; and *as to praise*, I am very willing to refer it to the Event, when it will be best known whether I shall deserve it.

In the mean time, If they cannot say I have represented the French greater than they are, made undue Comments upon their growing Power, or suggested unjust Probabilities as the Consequences of the Premises: If I have neither said any thing untrue of what is, or unlikely of what we expect; *for the rest let them say on*: I must yet give a stroke or two more, before I finish this Piece of still Life; and before we *can*

I arrive

arrive at a true Idea of the Formidable French Greatness.

In the former sheets I have view'd the Frontiers of *France*, and Examined them with respect to their immediate Action with their Enemies, with whom they every where carry on an offensive War.

I divid'd the Remainder of this Work into three Heads; of which the first is, The extraordinary Methods of Government, which are now in Use in that Kingdom, as to their own Subjects.

'Tis a long time ago since *France* lost her Liberty, I mean, Since the People of that Monarchy had any Legislative Right; Parliaments have remained there to this day, but as they are divested of any Power or part in the Government, they are rather Courts of Judicature, than Members of the Constitution; and this I only touch upon here, referring the Accounts of the Rise and Fall of Parliaments in *France* to a Chapter by it self.

It may suffice here to Note, That the Legislative and Executive Power is in the King, he raises Armies, Levies Taxes; makes Laws, and dispenses with them according to his Absolute Independent Pleasure, wholly Arbitrary and Despotick.

To ask whether this be for the Ease of the Subjects or no, is just as reasonable a Question, as whether it be most for a Man's Ease, to be a Freeman or a Slave; to have a just Right to his Inheritance and to claim it by Law, or to have it and his Life Precarious, and at the Will of his Prince?

But where the Ends of Government differ, and the Oppression of the Subject is not reckon'd a Consideration worth Notice in the Case; there, without doubt, Arbitrary Absolute Government is best, because it most conduces to the end aim'd at.

And this is enough to the Present Argument, of which this is the Abstract, That where the Glory of the Conquest, and the Lawrels of the King is the design of a Government, Arbitrary Power is the most proper Method in the World to bring it to Pass.

And this is the true Character of the present Constitution of the Government in *France*. Their King is Absolute, every Man Obeys without reserve, and he Com-

mands without restraint: If he oppresses them, they submit; if he loosens the Reins and stoops to do them Right, they Bow at his Foot, and thank him for the Justice, which in our Country we Command: If a Subject offend, he is Punish'd not by the Dimensions of the Crime, and the Nature of the Offence, but as his Majesty shall direct; and takes it for a Favour to have his Punishment squar'd according to the Nature of the Offence. In short, He is the King of whom the Scripture tells us, *His Wrath is as the Roaring of a Lyon, and no Man can say unto him, what dost thou?*

'Tis not my Present Work, to Discourse of the Nature and Reasons of Government, of Compacts between King and People; of Original Right by Property of time; of Native Freedom, Submission, &c. Things many People talk of, and few understand. I shall endeavour to avoid all Reflections of that Nature, being not Party-Man enough for that Work, at least I resolve this shall not be a Party-Paper.

But this is the thing before me to make it out, That this Absolute Despotick Government, whatever other Scandals it may lie under, is properly adapted to the French Greatness; and that the Methods of their Government at home have been particularly suited to, and a very great Reason of their Greatness abroad.

And this is Apparent from the Experience of the Present Age, wherein we see the French putting themselves forth to the utmost Extremity at Home, in Order to Maintain the Glory of their Conquests Abroad.

The Particulars, in which this Despotick Government at Home is adapted to their Great Designs, are these.

1. The Absolute Dependence, which the whole Body of the Gentry and Nobility have on the Favour of their Prince; This is such, and so generally Influences all the Great Families in *France*; That for a Gentleman, or a Man of Quality in *France*, to be out of the King's Favour, is to be undone; he accounts himself and his Family ruin'd, and has nothing left him to do, but by Friends or Interest, and with the lowest Submission, to regain the Favour of his Prince, or else go home and Hang himself;

self; I mean by this that it is Accounted the Ruin of a Man's Fortune, and Destruction of his Family, to lose his Interest at Court: The Reason is plain, either the Army, Revenue, the Church or the Law, one time or other, Employ all the Gentlemen in the Nation. There is not a Family in the Kingdom, but either have been, are, or expect to be Employed and Advanc'd, and to make their Fortunes from the Publick Employments.

'Tis Confess'd, the Gentry of *France* are very Numerous; but whoever pleases to look into the Infinite Number of Employments in the Kingdom, will not think it strange, that all the Families of any Considerations, are more or less Employ'd in them; when we Consider, that there are above 30000 Men Employ'd in the King's Revenue; when we Reflect on the Officers of 300000 Soldiers, and the vast Number of Non-Commission Officers and Cadets; when we Examine the Officers in 150 Ships, Great and Small, 30 Gallies, and 12 Marine Regiments, the Intendants of Provinces, Governours of Towns, and the like. The Officers of the Parliaments, and the prodigious Number of Civil Employments of the Numerous Clergy, consisting (as our Historians pretend) of above 100000, most of whom are of the Gentry, and are constantly watching the Court, as the *Heaven* they look after for their Happiness.

'Tis no Wonder that the Favour of the King is of so vast an Importance, where he has such a prodigious Number of Gifts to bestow.

I cannot speak of this without looking

back upon those Countreys, where the Prince can no sooner discountenance an Officer, or if he happen to require any Service of him which he does not like, but he'll presently come and resign up his Golden Key, or his white Staff, and tell his Majesty, *he is sorry he cannot serve him any longer*; and desire Leave to lay down and retire into the Country. This is Language not to be heard at *Versailles*. If the best Man in the Kingdom should say so to the King of *France*, he would find a Direction from his Majesty next Hour, what Part of the Kingdom he should retire to; perhaps at *Le bois de Vincennes*, the *Bastile*, or some such like Place.

But as he is sought to for his Favour with the greatest Assiduity, so he is on the other Hand serv'd with the greatest Fidelity: 'Tis very rare to find his Councils betray'd, or his Commands ill executed; one is the Consequence of the other, and both together concur to the Success of his Enterprizes.

I must crave Leave to make some useful Remarks from this Circumstance of the *French* Government in many Parts of this ensuing Work; and the Want of this Subserviency and Dependence shews it self among us in the Treachery and ill Behaviour of Persons employ'd.

I shall pursue this in the next Paper, only noting before hand that this Subserviency and Fidelity of Officers, is not a Dependent upon Despotic Government, merely as such, but might easily by proper Methods be obtained in other Countreys, and particularly in our own.

Mercure Scandale :

O R,

ADVICE from the Scandalous CLUB :

THE Undertakers of this Paper receiv'd a Summons to appear before the Club, from a certain Learned Gentleman, who was offended at Dr. H—

Advertisement, for the Cure of a Scandalous Distemper.

The Gentleman alledg'd, that it was below the Dignity of the Design, and a scandal

doi both to the Paper it self; and to the Author.

The Undertakers answered, They thought not; for since the Society was endeavouring to censure and reform all scandalous Practices, and would be glad to cure that of Whoring among the rest, they thought it was but Part of the Work that when they reform Men from the Vice, they should help 'em to a Doctor for the Disease.

The Doctor himself slept in also, and urg'd the publick Benefit; but as he began to be somewhat Satyrical upon the Times, and to tell 'em, That few People read this or any other Papers but what some way or other had Occasion for him. The Society desir'd him to consider where he was, and that if he went on, they should be oblig'd to take Notice of him.

The Doctor then proceeded to enter upon the Dignity of his Profession, and talk'd of *Asculapius*, *Paracelsus*, and all the Learned Ancestors of the College, and read a long Lecture of the Quality of a Physician; he very learnedly stated the Matter between a Quack and a Collegiate; and proved that 'twas no more Dishonour to have an Advertisement of his there, than that of Dr. *Lucas's* plain Man's Guide to Heaven; other than that one was to Cure the Body and the other the Soul.

This having occasion'd a long Debate, the Society at last resolv'd,

That exactly at Six Months after the People shall be pleas'd to leave off Whoring, and consequently be out of Danger of this scandalous Disease, this Advertisement should be left out superfluous.

Then the Printer of the *London-Post* was brought before the Club for two most scandalous Crimes.

First, for Printing, that the Author of *Heracitus Ridens* was Committed to Newgate, which was prov'd to be false, the Person himself appearing to Demand Justice against him.

The Society willingly declared, that it was a scandalous thing to print Men into Jail before their Time; and for so barbarous an Action, ordered him to publish the

Mistake in his next Paper, and make the Gentleman Satisfaction on Pain of being registered in the List of Incurrigibles.

He was farther accus'd for putting *D. F.* as the Author of a certain Book of his own making; the Person he own'd to be meant, having declared he knew nothing of it.

He pleaded the Custom of his Trade to put any Name to a Book, when he thinks it will sell the better.

The Society contented themselves with Voting it Scandalous, and Order'd him to make satisfaction by a Future amendment, — tho' they have little hopes of it.

Advertisements are taken in by J. Matthews, in Pilkington-Court in Little Britain.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S.

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